

Statement from Ryan Jeffcoat

The matter was overseen by my Crime Manager at the time Detective Chief Inspector Michael Stoltenberg. I was assisted on the investigation by a very competent and dedicated team of detectives with a vast amount of experience in matters of serious crime.

The conduct of the investigation has never been criticised by the court. To the best of my knowledge the only people to have ever raised any issue was the defence team of Ms Stephen, which is not an uncommon practice in policing. I maintain that I collected and presented all available inculpatory and exculpatory evidence some of which tended to raise inconsistencies with narratives provided by Ms Stephen.

I am satisfied in the way the investigation was conducted. This investigation was complex, well-resourced and completed without bias. The ODPP had available to them a significant amount of evidence and they elected to continue with the prosecution. They elected to ex-officio the murder charge after it was dismissed at committal hearing.

Regardless of personal opinions it must be remembered we were dealing with the death of a human being. It is the duty of the Police to collect the evidence, the Crown to present the evidence and for the Court to determine if the circumstances around that death were unlawful or justified.

In this particular case the court determined that Jonda Stephen was justified in her actions.

The assertion that Ms Stephen's charging resulted from a lack of understanding of self-defence and domestic violence is without merit.

My work and previous prosecutions around acts of domestic violence is without blemish and speaks volumes of the seriousness in which I took the issue. I worked closely with Fiona Camilleri the co-coordinator at Staying Home Leaving Violence in Broken Hill to assist vulnerable women and their children suffering abuse at the hands of their partners.

This included leading the investigation, prosecution and ultimate conviction of Bradley Stewart for the multiple strangulation's and assaults of Andrea Khan in Broken Hill and acting as 2IC in the investigation into the attempted murder of Eileen Williams by Trevor Bugmy. Both were highly publicised and complex investigations. Both involved heinous acts of violence inflicted upon them by their defacto partners.

In addition to these more contemporary matters, I also worked many years in remote aboriginal communities where domestic violence and violence against women and children is rife. I have investigated and charged with many matters involving serious assaults and sexual assaults against women. The suggestion that I lack understanding with the complexities around domestic violence is an unfair characterisation.